

MAKING A CASE: CREATING A PROFILE

- Top Down Typology
- Bottom up Approaches
- Case Study: John Duffy

What is offender profiling?

- Originally coined by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Providing a likely description of an offender based on an analysis of
 - Crime scene
 - The victim
 - Other available evidence



What is offender profiling?

- BUT - most controversial and misunderstood area of criminal detection (Davies 1977)
- Distorted by media perception and popular fiction, eg:
 - The Silence of the Lambs
 - Cracker
 - Waking the Dead
- Reality - a viable process but unproven, subjective and rarely providing specific identities



Goals of profiling

- Offender profiling does not solve crime but provides a means of narrowing the range of potential suspects
- Holmes & Holmes 1996 - three major goals of profiling:
 1. **Social and psychological assessment**
 - Basic information: personality, age, race, sex, employment, education, marital status
 2. **Psychological evaluation of belongings**
 - Possessions which may associate offender with crime scene, eg: souvenirs, photos, pornography
 3. **Interviewing suggestions and strategies**
 - Specific interviewing strategies developed for particular offenders

Approaches to profiling - Top Down

The American method - a 'top-down' approach

- FBI research (1978)
 1. In-depth interviews with convicted murderers
 2. Detailed information from behavioural science unit
 - Classification system for several serious crimes (including rape and murder)
 - Eg: murders classified as 'organised' or 'disorganised' (Rossiter et al 1988)

Approaches to profiling - Top Down

Organised

Features:

Planned crimes

Self-control

Covers tracks

Victim is stranger

Characteristics:

Intelligent

Skilled occupation

Socially competent

Angry/depressed

Disorganised

Features:

Unplanned crimes

Haphazard

Leaves clues

Characteristics:

Socially inadequate

Unskilled

First/last born child

Lives alone

Knows victim

Confused/frightened

Top Down Typography: Canter et al (2004)

- **Aim:** To test reliability of organised/disorganised typologies
- **Method:** Content analysis using psychometric method of **multi-dimensional scaling (MDS)**
- MDS applied to 100 cases to see if features of typographies distinctively different
- **Procedure:** Cases: published accounts of serial killers in USA collected over many years by independent researcher
- Third crime of each serial killer analysed
- **Crime Classification Manual** (Douglas, 1992) used to classify crimes as organised or disorganised

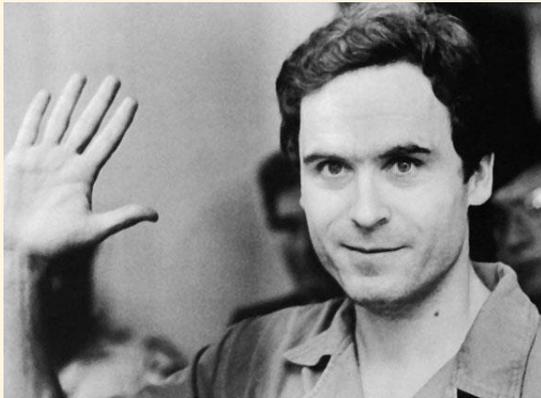
Top Down Typography: Canter et al (2004)

- **Results:**

- Twice as many **disorganised** as **organised** crime-scene actions identified
- Only two crime scene behaviours co-occurred in organised typographies; body concealed (70%), & sexual activity (75%)
- Only sex acts & vaginal rape occur in two thirds of disorganised crime
- Most other behaviours co-occur regularly in less than half crimes committed
- Further stats analysis: failed to separate organised & disorganised variables

Top Down Typology: Canter et al (2004)

- **Conclusions:**
 - No real distinction between two types of serial murder: all crimes have organised element
 - Distinctions between serial killers: function of different ways they exhibit disorganised aspects of their activities
 - Better to look at individual personality



Bottom Up Approach

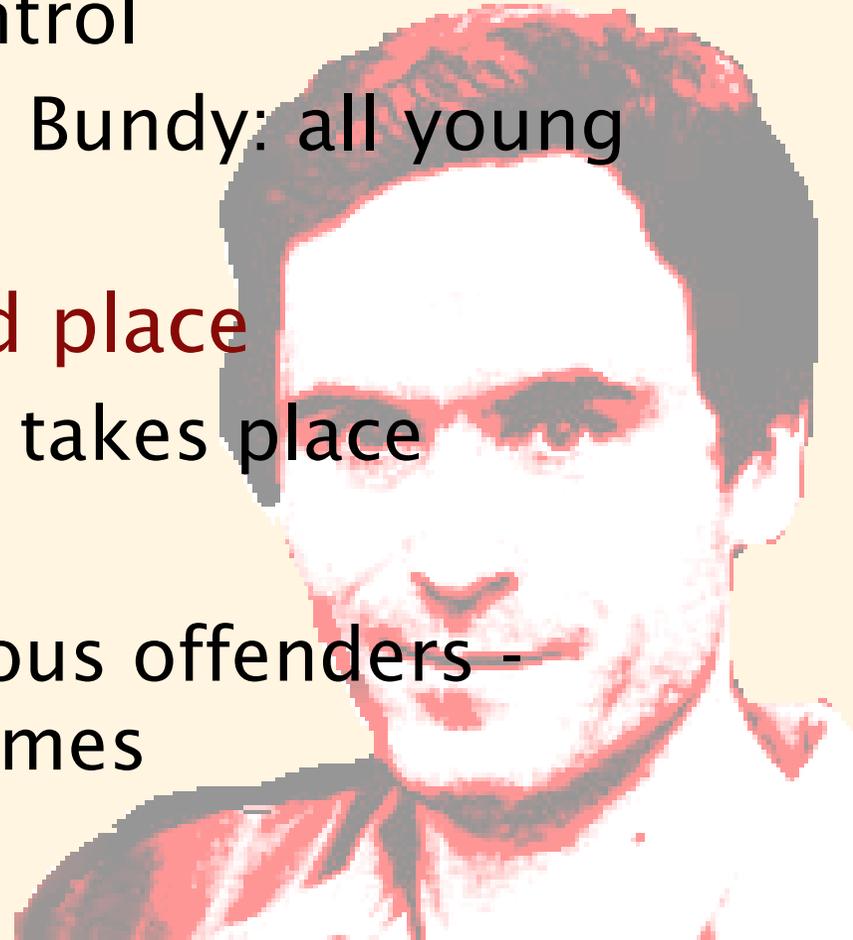
The British method - a 'bottom-up' approach

- Later start and less organised
- Canter (1980s)
- Based on psychological theories and methodologies (cognitive social)
- Theories formulated to show **how** and **why** variations in criminal behavior occur
- Consistencies **within** actions of offenders
- Differences between them
- More objective & reliable (than Top Down)

Bottom Up Approach:

Main factors

1. **Interpersonal coherence**
 - Degree of violence/control
 - Type of victim (eg: Ted Bundy: all young women)
2. **Significance of time and place**
 - When and where crime takes place
3. **Forensic awareness**
 - Police records of previous offenders – links to subsequent crimes



Bottom Up Approach: Canter & Heritage (1990)

- **Aim:** To identify a behaviour pattern from similarities between offences
- **Method:** Content analysis (smallest-space analysis)
 - 66 sexual offences from various police forces (committed by 27 offenders)
 - 33 offence variables found linked to behaviour characteristic (eg; variable 2 - 'surprize attack')
- **Results:** Following variables central to 66 cases:
 - vaginal intercourse
 - impersonal language
 - No reaction to victim
 - surprise attack
 - Victim's clothing disturbed

Bottom Up: Canter & Heritage (1990)

- **Results** (continued):
 - Suggests pattern of behaviour: impersonal attack & irrelevant response to victim
 - Less central elements : attempted intimacy, sexual behaviour, overt violence & aggression
- **Conclusions:**
 - -Useful as all five aspects contribute to all sex offences (but in different individual patterns)
 - - Can determine whether two or more offences were committed by same person
 - - Analysis extended to other crimes: useful patterns of behaviour



Limitations of profiling

Limitations

- Only appropriate for **small number of specific crimes** (Holmes & Holmes 1996):
 1. Sadistic torture (sex assaults)
 2. Evisceration (tearing out gut/bowels)
 3. Postmortem slashing/cutting
 4. Rape
 5. Motiveless fire starting
 6. Satanic and ritualistic crime
- Problem of assessing profiling: cases rare; difficult to analyse effectively

Limitations of profiling

Other problems

- **Reliability** of interviewing (to provide basis for theories)
- Insufficient empirical investigation
- Too instructive/intuitive
- **Bias** in police analysis (Barnum effect)
- **Ethics**

Does profiling work?

See surveys

- Copson G. (1995) 'Is offender profiling really necessary?' - a study of offender profiling (Police research group)
- Questionnaires to police officers - results:
 - 80% - profiling useful
 - 14% - assisted in solving case
 - 3% - provided ID of offender
 - **Conclusions**
 - Satisfaction depended on individual profiler
 - Little consistency of approach

Does profiling work?

Surveys (contd)

- Pinizzotto & Funkel (1990) research: 'Are professional profilers more accurate than laypersons?' Compared groups of:
 - Profilers
 - Detectives
 - Psychologists
 - Students
- ..in their ability to write profiles of a homicide and sex offence (closed cases)
- **Results:** profilers significantly more accurate on sex offence but detectives more accurate on homicide

Does profiling work?

- Case of Rachel Nickell murder investigation in 1994
- Elaborate profiling - failed conviction

The screenshot shows the BBC News website interface. At the top, the BBC NEWS logo is visible. Below it, the location is set to 'UK' and the date is 'Friday, 6 April, 2001, 09:11 GMT 10:11 UK'. The main headline is '£125,000 for Rachel Nickell officer', accompanied by a photograph of a smiling woman. A sidebar on the right contains a search bar, navigation links for various news programs (BBC Radio News, BBC One TV News, World News Summary, BBC News 24 Bulletin), and a 'See also' section with links to related articles from 1998 and 1999. Below the main article, there are sections for 'Internet links' (Metropolitan Police) and 'Top UK stories now:' listing various news items like 'Postcode lottery in GP services' and 'Leanne killer jailed for life'. At the bottom, there are 'Where I Live' sections for 'LDN' and 'Leicester', and a 'See also' section with links to related news items from 2001, 2000, and 1998.

This screenshot shows the BBC News website interface for the date 'Tuesday, 29 October, 2002, 17:19 GMT'. The location is set to 'England'. The main headline is 'Stagg storms out of 'Cracker' hearing', with a photograph of Colin Stagg. A sidebar on the left contains navigation links for various news programs (News Front Page, World UK, England, N Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Politics, Business, Entertainment, Science/Nature, Technology, Health, Education, Talking Point, Country Profiles, In Depth, Programmes). Below the main article, there is a caption: 'Colin Stagg wrote the book 'Who Really Killed Rachel''. The text below the caption reads: 'The man acquitted of murdering Rachel Nickell stormed out of a disciplinary hearing on the criminal psychologist who helped police bring him to court.'

Case Study: John Duffy

- Case of John Duffy: the railway rapist
- Canter 1994 - profiling led to Duffy's 1988 conviction for rape & murder of several women
- Nov 2000: admitted to 25 offences between 1975 & 1986. Attacks on women (aged 15 - 32)
- **Profiling:**
- Analysis of 24 sexual assaults and two murders in London over previous four years
 - What was said to victims?
 - Were clothes pulled/torn/cut?
 - How did attacker deal with victim after assault?

Case Study: John Duffy

- Computer used to analyse patterns
- Canter's social psychology analysis of behaviour at crime scene focusing on:
 - Relationship (if any) to victim
 - Degree of domination over victim
 - Clues to relationships with others and how powerful/secure in everyday life
 - Geographical profiling - use of mental maps
- Profile created July 1986

Canter's profile of John Duffy

Profile	Duffy
Lives in Kilburn/Cricklewood	Lived in Kilburn
Married, no children	Married, infertile
Has marriage problems	Separated
Loner, few friends	Only two friends (co-offenders)
Physically small, unattractive	5ft 4in with acne
Martial artist, body-builder	Member of martial arts club
Needs to dominate women	Violent, attacked wife
Fantasies of rape, bondage	Tied up his wife before sex

An extraordinarily accurate profile

- Duffy originally placed as 1,505th on list of 2,000 suspects
- Post-profile large-scale surveillance operation
- Arrested November 1986

